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ABSTRACT

The ideal promotional effort for an educational television (ETV) station is dependent on a professional approach to the problem. This means that each ETV station should employ a public relations manager and should keep him informed about all major station decisions. The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) has a campaign of its own to bring attention to PBS programs carried by local ETV stations. This campaign utilizes spot announcements on network television and ads in newspapers in the top ten markets in the country. Spot announcements on network stations are presented near the early evening news programs in order to reach potential viewers who 1) have a television set, 2) are home to watch television that evening, and 3) have at least some interest in informational programing. Network commercials are also important in reaching the non-urban population and, on a cost-per-thousand basis, have proved to be an effective, economical way to advertise. In the highest education-income range, however, there are potential viewers who do not watch network television. Since these people rely for the most part on large metropolitan dailies for their information, PBS places ads in the top ten metropolitan dailies in the country. (JY)

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THE IDEAL PROMOTION EFFORT - NAEB Convention, Miami, Florida, October 18

Edward L. Morris

The ideal promotion effort is dependent on a professional approach to the problem. Today we are going to be talking about such an effort. I have spoken in this national forum before but not from such a vantage point. I remember when much more attention was being paid in this national NAEB meeting to radio and surprisingly this was in 1960, twelve years after everyone else in the country had already recognized the television revolution for what it was. Ironically, we are foregathered here now to talk about the ideal promotion effort for public television and still there are very few managers here - and they ought to be. An ideal promotion/PR effort requires an intense effort by a trained professional with the backing and understanding of his management.

Moreover, so far as public relations in public television is concerned, our profession is a step-child and our stations suffer for it. Fortunately, one of the charges given to the Public Broadcasting Service to carry out is to extend and increase public awareness of the PBS schedule. This is my responsibility and this is the aim and objective of everything we have done and shall be doing to advance the professionalism in our industry.

This afternoon in my part of this program, with the assistance of David Swanston, I will try to show and tell you about the ideal promotion and public relations effort; what it is, what we must have from production centers to do it and what we have done with it and some results. I intend also to speak of the need for a corporate identity both local and national and how we can get there. Because I know it is not now clear, even though the initial phase is over: I will explain again

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the rationale behind a unified, one thrust advertising campaign and such results as we can point to now.

Before I get into these items, let me say one more thing about public relations for the benefit of the managers present and those who will carry the word to them: Public relations is not something done by the office manager in his spare time and public relations and promotion are not a sometime thing. All, I repeat, all contact with the public including the development of programming policy has a public relations in-put. It is not just the public relations person's job to get your announcements into the newpapers: it is this person's job to keep you from making a mistake - use them this way and your troubles will lessen but be sure that you hire someone to do the job who you will pay almost as much as you do your chief engineer: he or she may help keep you on the air, too!

Now, in developing our national promotional program, we have to start from certain premises. In other words, we know that the stations need certain things. For instance we know they need:

1. Individual program data including:

    a. cast list
    b. credits

2. Episodic information (i.e. story line or general program information)

3. Pictures: good 8 x 10 B&W with proper captions

4. Pictures: good color (usually 4 x 5) with captions

5. A good feature which might be:

    a. About the cast
    b. About the story
    c. About the history surrounding the program or series

6. Good slide (color and mounted)

Then, after all of this - what do we get from the production centers and how far in advance do we get it and distribute it. For IPD (program guide) we work 44 days in advance. For press releases we work 21 days in advance. For pictures: BUT: THERE ARE CERTAIN PROGRAMS WHICH DO NOT GIVE US THE LEAD TIME.

But let's assume that we get the information. Then: What do we produce and why. David Swanston will tell you about that.

(SWANSTON)

Let's see the results as well.

Now it is time to talk about two troublesome subjects: the National Advertising program and the national publicity/promotion program:

(ROLL COMMERCIALS)

Now let's talk about it. Why did PBS choose to advertise on network television and newspapers in the top ten markets, rather than going into newspapers throughout the country alone?

Unlike print, TV is an intrusive medium. The advertising placed within TV programs cannot be avoided. Print must be selected out for reading. Creating awareness in TV is easier than in any other medium. And TV also has the virtues of color, sound, movement and pictures. Finally, network TV attracts the biggest audiences to one place of any advertising medium in the country. For all these reasons, television has become the number one advertising medium -- by far -- in the United States.

Add to those general facts and conclusions, the following specific advantages for public television:

1. By advertising public television on commercial television we created the impact of news and the excitement that comes from any such bold and unusual advertising buy. Just the originality of PBS commercials

showing up on CBS, NBC and ABC gave PBS a lift and ancillary print coverage.

2. By advertising public television on commerical television, we reached nearly every TV home in the United States -- which we could not accomplish, no matter how many newspapers we were able to buy.

3. By advertising public television on the three network evening news programs, we reached the most likely audience to view PBS, and we are not wasting a single impression. Incidentally, no other advertiser can make that statement. We are reaching people who have TV sets, who are watching that night, and who are home available tc watch public television's programs which immediately follow that night. And by reaching them through news programs, we are reaching the very people who are most likely to be attracted to what public television has to offer.

4. By advertising public television on the network news programs, we are achieving special impact outside the major cities, since TV news is especially heavily viewed outside the major cities, where there are not as many or as good sources of news. TV Network news programs attract substantial audiences nationwide, but they attract especially heavy audiences outside the major markets.

5. While it is fashionable to look for the non-TV viewer through other than the TV medium, the best potential viewer is one who now views TV and who can be isolated in the quality vehicles of commercial TV (which at this time of year, are the news programs and Sunday sports programs). These people may, when the commercial content is not satisfying, be pre-sold to view a competitive PBS offering which is on that night. Through the news programs, we were able to reach the potential

PBS audience with a consistent schedule during our premiere period, and create viewing on the same night.

6. By means of the schedule be bought on network TV, public television reached an estimated 185,000,000 homes, with an estimated unduplicated daily reach of 46,000,000 homes. Thus, we reached over 75% of the TV homes of the nation, and we reached each of these homes four times on the average, with advertisements for PBS prime time programs.

7. Not only were we able to reach audience totals we could gain in no other way, we were able to achieve these totals at a lower cost per thousand than through any other advertising medium -- an average cost per thousand of $1.54. Keep in mind, too, that this cpm represents the cost of reaching every potential public television viewer, and everyone who actually saw a public television commercial. When we compare this with newspaper cost-per-thousands, which are higher, we are making an unfair comparison, because not everyone who buys a newspaper with our ad, reads that ad, or is available that night to watch television. So if we were to compute cost-per-thousand ad exposure of network television vs. newspapers, network television would ultimately be more efficient in the comparison we are now making.

If network television is so good for advertising public television, why didn't we put all of PBS' money into the commercial network schedules?

We used newspapers to give PBS a balanced campaign. There are some people today, concentrated in the highest education-income range, who watch very little television and who are very selective about what they do watch. These people, logically, are newspaper readers. They are especially valuable to PBS, as community leaders and as most likely

candidates for watching public television programs, but unlike TV viewers, not as likely to be available for viewing that night. They are an important market, nevertheless. Newspapers are an effective means of reaching them -- that is, getting to the likely PBS viewers who do not watch the network news programs.

We selected newspapers in the top ten markets for the following reasons:

1. These are the most influential papers, with influence extending beyond the confines of the particular city the newspapers orginates in. Thus, the New York Times, Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, Detroit News, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle-Examiner, Washington Post, Philadelphia Bulletin, Dallas Times, etc., cover the influential people of entire sections of the country who are important for public television to reach.

2. By advertising in these 10 markets, PBS is covering an area containing about 20,000,000 TV homes. which is 30% of the total U.S. TV homes, and about 47% of PBS' potential audience. Our newspaper schedule reached 12,000,000 homes by concentrating in the strongest markets, at a cost-per-thousand of approximately $1.80.

3. Beyond the top 10 markets, each newspaper becomes a less efficient buy as line rates generally rise on a cost-per-thousand basis when the market size decreases. And the smaller newspapers in the smaller towns do not reach out with the area-wide influence that the giant newspapers have. The elite in Santa Barbara read the LA Times; in Peoria the Chicago Tribune; in Macon the Atlanta Journal; in Hempstead, the New York Times.

In sum, our media schedule, balanced between network television news programs and top newpaper TV pages, is not only an efficient media

buy reaching both regular television viewers and the elite non-viewers; but it also gives PBS an impact and publicity life that could be achieved in no other way.

It can truly be said that by reaching people available to watch television on the night they were at home watching television with commercials about programs they could see that very night -- PBS attained the most efficient media buy in the history of advertising. Even if a few markets did not carry some programs on a particular night, the drop-out was so small, as you will see, as to be insignificant.

In a few instances there have been questions raised as to why PBS made the decision to go with network television "commercials"that said, "Tonight, on another channel." This choice was made because, frankly, with the varying schedules of some of our stations there was really no other way to go and the idea, according to our experts, Larry Grossman and Paul Klein, was simply too good and too sound to pass up.
Mr. Grossman, head of our advertising agency and Mr. Klein, who was vice president of NBC in research, both agreed that the impact of the network spots would far outweigh the fact that perhaps some stations would elect not to carry the PBS schedule as planned. Both of these gentlemen point out that it is common practice for the other networks to feed their commercials for nights of the week in promotion routinely and that the local stations handle the matter in the same way that PBS suggested - with a local tag. All stations knew that this was the plan for several months and the local tag route was suggested.

Moreover, Mr. Klein points out that part of the effectiveness of the promotion on the commercial networks is heightened by the cumulative effect and the attention called to the programs far outweighs the

poor reaction of viewers who might be annoyed to find that a program announced for a given night might not appear because of a local option to change the PBS national schedule. The total effect has been devastatingly in our favor as the overnight ratings indicate and VARIETY which has not been notably friendly attributes the increased viewership to this bold move on our part.

National publicity in your local market:

Feed of feature material and pix.

a. Gets papers used to the schedule
b. Utilizes this experience (with local update)
c. Increases professionalism with this input
d. Reduces waste in duplication

We thoroughly believe that the local professionals should be kept up to date on what is being done by national service and production centers but this is a problem on which we are still working.

I want to give you some idea, however, how the national effort is and has worked.

SLIDES

Many questions have been asked about the need for a national identity. I think it is demonstrated that the national network identity is an aid to the stations. A national identity helps to build an audience in your local market in some of the ways I have described. In fact, throughout television the association with a symbolic "network" pulls in viewers.

In the same way the PBS association also makes easier the

building of national publicity which trickles down locally. I.E., TIME Season opening article although negative in some ways - three pix and the logo. It is for this same reason that we insist that production centers associate all of their publicity with the network. I am particularly proud that just in the space of nine months we have turned around most publications and they are now identifying public television with the Public Broadcasting Service.

EXAMPLES SHOW SLIDES

So you see, already the association is paying off for all of us -- with more publicity and above all -- the appearance of strength without the subordination of the local stations.

If the future brings us a larger budget we have already asked for more funds for local advertising and promotion. We believe in it and of course we would provide it - the only missing ingredient - money.

In the meantime, we must have more professionalism at the local level to make what PBS provides more effective. It is only with these skills interlocked that massive promotion will be successful. Clearly without a local effort intensified you will not increase your viewers -- and this after all, is the objective of the exercise.